APPENDIX B.

Address by Captain Pryor, Gold Mining Board, Kolar.

Your Excellency and Gentlemen,—As the Representative of the Kolar Gold Field Mining Board, I am desired to bring before you five subjects of more or less vital interest to the various Companies on the Kolar Gold Field, which Companies I may say represent at the current market prices a Capital of over £3,500,000 and employ about 11,700 persons, of whom 355 are Europeans and 165 Eurasians, the remainder being natives. Further, I may state that the present out-put of gold amounts to over £1,000,000 sterling per annum, and that on this, the Royalty alone, payable to your Government, would be £50,000 or say 9 lakhs of rupees. It will therefore be seen that our industry is not only a growing but a most important one, and is now of considerable magnitude, and such that, we trust, entitles us to expect your most favorable consideration and we hope immediate action on the following requests :—

I. *Special legislation for the protection of gold quartz, amalgam and sponge gold.*—The absolute necessity for special legislation on this matter continues to be constantly and forcibly brought before us; the details of many cases proving the defectiveness of the existing laws to protect our property must, I venture to think, be still fresh in your memory, a deputation from the Mining Board having some time ago specially brought this subject before you and quoted many instances in support of their petition; and subsequent cases further demonstrate the need of an alteration in the existing laws. Your Excellency will, I think, agree, even where convictions have been sustained, the penalties are such that they are not likely to sufficiently deter persons from repeating thefts; but it is not here that the weakness of the Law is most manifest but from the fact that it admits of the accused clearing himself from responsibility by denying all knowledge of the quartz, &c., found in his possession; and it is needless to say he is not slow to take advantage of such a condition. Hence it is that the Mining Board, feeling assured that such gold must have been surreptitiously obtained, prays your Government for the passing of a short Act throwing the onus of rightful possession on the accused, and requiring, in cases of conviction, the enforcement of much more rigorous penalties. If this were done, a very considerable and satisfactory check would soon result on the robberies (to say nothing of the money value) that we fear are now so often being committed, and which, under existing circumstances, we are apparently powerless to stamp out. Some little time ago, the members of the Mining Board had the honor of talking over various subjects, one of which was that of "Special Legislation," with Mr. Lee Warner, the late British Resident; and although the interview was not an official one, yet I am at liberty to say Mr. Lee Warner was fully convinced that the necessity undoubtedly arose for such a special act, and in subsequent unofficial correspondence, not only expressed himself to this effect, but quoted, in support an analagous Act "wherein the possession without a license of arms is in certain cases punishable," and personally could see no serious objection to the possession of sponge gold, &c., being also similarly made illegal. In referring to this important subject at the last Dasara Assembly, your Excellency said that legislation was deferred, pending the result of Mr. Grundy's enquiry, and that on the receipt of his report you would again be able to press the measure on the attention of Government. Since then we have heard nothing definite in the matter, and therefore take this opportunity of asking your Excellency what further action has been taken, and if we may soon expect the sanctioning by Government of such an Act as that now prayed for.

II. *The improvement and strengthening of the Police Force.*—It is generally felt that the existing Police Force is incapable of satisfactorily coping with the requirements of the Field, and more particularly from a "detective" standpoint. Robberies of various kinds are perpetrated in spite of all the precautions taken by them and the different Companies to protect their mills, quartz, yards, shafts, &c. This may possibly be partly due to the difficulties experienced in getting smart and reliable workmen, as well as trustworthy information; hence particularly in the face of the supposed large and undetected traffic in gold quartz, &c., we think the Police Force might with advantage be strengthened with men of a higher grade and of known "detective" abilities. These—combined with the aid of the Special Act asked for—would no doubt very considerably lessen the robberies, and prevent the losses now sustained by the Government and the various Companies, and we trust this matter will also have your very serious attention.

III. *Up-keep of roads.*—About twelve months since, in response to previous complaints, I had the pleasure of driving the Executive Engineer, Kolar Division, over the proposed position of the new road—petitioned for last year—as well as the Government main road through the Field. I pointed out the then much needed repairs and understood from him that he would at once requisition for the necessary permission to take the work in hand. I however regret to say but little has as yet been done, and the roads continue in more or less unsatisfactory condition. We are therefore again compelled to bring this matter before your Excellency.

IV. *The reduction of railway rates (on the Kolar Gold Field State Railway) on coals, firewood, lime, machinery and other bulky goods, from Bouringpet to the Mines.*—Seeing the traffic on the line has now so considerably increased and is so remunerative to your Government, the Mining Board again beg that you will take these important facts into favorable consideration and that you will see your way clear to make a reduction in the rates charged upon the articles mentioned. I might point out that there is still a large quantity of timber brought over the roads which would, I think, be sent by rail if the freights were reduced.

V. *The appointment of a properly qualified metalliferous Mining Inspector.*—During last year we were favoured with the presence of Mr. James Grundy, H. M. I. Mines in India. He spent some considerable time amongst us visiting the various mines on the Field, and in doing so was naturally made acquainted with our requirements as well as with the various Rules and Regulations we were then formulating for the protection of the surface and underground works, the safety of life and health of workmen, &c. Although the Board has not been apprised of the result of Mr. Grundy's inspection, yet they are aware that a special Mining Commission has been sitting at Calcutta to consider his reports and suggestions with the view of framing Mining Laws for the whole of India. Assuming the outcome of this will be the passing of certain Rules and Regulations as well as the appointing of Mining Inspectors, we beg to remind you, that our mines being metalliferous, are worked on a different principle to Coal Mines, and would therefore suggest to your Excellency, when such intended laws and appointments are submitted to your Government, that every care will be taken to see that the proposed Laws are adapted to mining on the Kolar Gold Field and that our interests are properly protected, and also that the Inspector of Mines be not only well qualified, but one who has had practical experience in metalliferous mines. This, your Excellency, concludes the special subjects I have the honor of submitting to this Assembly, and in thanking you for the courteous manner with which you have listened to my remarks, I would also beg to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Mining Board, to thank the Government of Her Highness the Maharani-Regent for past favors, as well as the kind way in which our application and suggestions have always been received.